

Good bye speech, annual meeting 2018

As your Chief Commander for the last two years, I have been truly fortunate and blessed that I had a Board of Directors that is so talented that they were able to make me look good in spite of my frequent "Faux Pas." As I learned from one of my Canadian French friends past Chief Commander Robert Pepin, Faux Pas is also plural!

However, my greatest good fortune came from a person that has always made my life better, gave support through some tough times, cheered me on when things went well and sat through most of my talks even though she had heard them multiple times. I'll ask her to come up so I can get through the rest of my message. Dot????

Many of you know I don't usually write my speeches down since I have always gotten my inspiration from you, the members. This time I did write my comments down because I wanted to make sure I could get through this. Now I'm not so sure it's working.

Our organization has existed for 104 years give or take. We have had well over 60 thousand members but in the year 2003, we started a decline in membership that has just now started to slow down. As we all know, the last 15 years have been different and the invention of the internet and a miserable economy for most of that time didn't help.

The last couple of years have been an "All hands on deck" effort to turn things around. Headquarters, the Marketing committee, Education, Planning, Membership, IT... in short everybody pitched in and gave their opinions on how best to go forward.

We contracted several firms and spent some serious grant money to ensure we had the best information on which to base our decisions.

We all believe in tradition and we all know it's very important but in reality, tradition only brought us to 2003, the year our membership started declining. We continued to ride our tired horse named "Tradition" for 15 years and achieved the same results ... declining membership. In the end your Board of Directors chose a path quite different from our history and tradition. We decided to break the trend and embraced a new path!

America's Boating Club is the new path we believe will better describe and define who we are. We are still the United States Power Squadrons and we are still the best educators on the planet but what we have neglected to communicate and market is that we are boaters, we have fun and we work within our communities making the waters a safer place.

Now to accomplish this we had to achieve financial stability by living within our means, increasing our revenues and quite simply by working smarter. All of you and especially the officers that make up your board of directors along with headquarters personnel under the

direction of Mary Catherine Berube helped us achieve a 150 thousand dollar surplus over the last two years. This is a remarkable achievement and I ask that you give yourselves a round of applause.

Dot and I will miss this but we are not going far. We will continue to work for USPS/America's Boating Club and will continue to "Grip and Grin." That slogan that became very important to us was first uttered by our good friend Bob Brandenstein and I was happy to use it.

We urge all of you to remember to be personal, bring friends and family to your meetings keep usage of the impersonal internet down to a meeting...after all, you can't "Grip and Grin" with a computer!

Ladies and gentlemen, it has been our greatest honor serving these past two years as your Chief and First Lady.